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THE COMPETITION BUREAU OF CANADA

2015–2018
STRATEGIC VISION

Canada

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COMPETITION BUREAU AT A GLANCE

The Competition Bureau's (the Bureau) legislated mandate is to help the Canadian marketplace be more competitive and innovative for the benefit of Canadian businesses and consumers.

The Bureau administers and enforces the *Competition Act*, including provisions enacted by Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL), as well as the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (except as it relates to food), the *Precious Metals Marking Act* and the *Textile Labelling Act*.

It delivers on this mandate in two primary ways:

- **Competition enforcement:** As an independent law enforcement agency, the Bureau does not hesitate to take appropriate action when it uncovers evidence of contravention of the legislation it administers.
- **Competition promotion:** The Bureau promotes competition-enhancing policies and practices by advocating before all levels of governments, promoting compliance in the private sector, engaging with domestic and international partners and conducting outreach with key stakeholders (i.e., consumer groups, the business community, the legal community and the Canadian public).

The Bureau is committed to using all of its authorities, through both law enforcement and competition promotion, to enable Canadians at home and abroad to enjoy the benefits of a healthy, competitive marketplace.

Guiding Principles

Vision

To be among the leading competition agencies in the world; one that is open, transparent, collaborative and effective; one that vigorously enforces the law, promoting competition to support ongoing economic development and provide Canadians with the benefits of a competitive and innovative marketplace.

Mission

To promote and protect competition, the Bureau will administer and enforce our legislation with fairness and predictability, to:

- prevent and deter anti-competitive behaviour and deceptive marketing practices;
- review mergers and seek to ensure they do not harm competition; and
- empower consumers and businesses.

Our Core Values

Openness and transparency

We engage with our stakeholders through a wide range of new and existing means of communication to dialogue and share information, and to explain to Canadians and our partners the benefits of competition for consumers, businesses and the development of the Canadian economy.

Collaboration

We work with our partners to advance competition and to promote a marketplace that is functioning efficiently.

Integrity and fairness

We act with integrity and fairness and in the public interest at all times. This requires a principle-based approach to enforcing and administering the *Competition Act* and labelling statutes. Our decisions are based on facts, evidence and sound judgement. We are committed to protecting the confidentiality of sensitive information.

Respect

We interact honestly and respectfully with our colleagues, partners and all Canadians — recognizing their diversity and their individual contributions to healthy competition.

Leadership

We show leadership through our actions, strategic approach and commitment to continuous innovation.

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The Canadian marketplace is continuously evolving, driven by the latest technology and business innovations. Maintaining and encouraging greater competition is a key contributor to ongoing economic growth and development in Canada. At the Competition Bureau, it's imperative that we keep pace with these developments for Canadians to continue to benefit from access to diverse products and services at competitive prices.

In this context, our 2015–2018 Strategic Vision is intended to guide our actions over the next three years, outlining how we will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the enforcement and promotion activities we undertake with regulators, policymakers and a variety of market participants.

Our longer-term objectives emphasize our vision that:

- Active enforcement will continue to be our primary focus, and that we will not hesitate to take appropriate action to safeguard Canadians against anti-competitive conduct; and
- Strengthened promotion and awareness will be essential to realizing the benefits of a competitive marketplace in Canada.

These actions will reinforce the links between our strategic objectives and operational activities. They will enable us to make the best use of our resources as we strengthen competition in Canada with an effective combination of enforcement and promotion.

The result of this strategic vision will be a Bureau that is more collaborative, open and transparent, and one that is more strategic and effective in the realization of its mandate.

Sincerely,

John Pecman
Commissioner of Competition

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COMPETITION

STRATEGIC VISION: 2015–2018

1. Increase compliance

Use all available tools to increase compliance with Canada's competition laws and prevent and deter anti-competitive or deceptive conduct that could threaten the health, growth and confidence in the Canadian economy.

The Bureau will leverage all of its enforcement and promotion tools to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its investigations and merger reviews, cost-effectively securing compliance with the laws it administers.

Advancing our shared compliance policies and programs, we will work with businesses and the legal community so they know how to comply with the law while providing a channel for consumers to register complaints. Through shared compliance, we can enhance the overall impact of our activities, bringing greater benefits to consumers, businesses and the economy.

We will implement and enforce the new provisions of the *Competition Act* as amended by CASL, which gives the Bureau new powers to target false and misleading representations and deceptive marketing practices in social media, promotional emails, text messages and instant messages.

Our commitments for 2015–2018:

- Seek appropriate remedies for cartels, anti-competitive conduct, and false and misleading representations.
- Challenge mergers that substantially prevent or lessen competition.
- Work with public procurement authorities to detect and prevent bid-rigging and cartels so that Canadians receive full value for money spent on their behalf.
- Use competition law enforcement and promotion strategically and in complementary ways, for a full-spectrum compliance approach.
- Establish a Compliance Unit to oversee and coordinate Bureau-wide shared compliance promotion activities.
- Develop and implement an outreach strategy that will actively encourage businesses to adopt rigorous compliance practices, policies and programs.
- Support enforcement of and compliance with CASL by collaborating with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and our foreign counterparts, and by increasing awareness of CASL among consumers and businesses.

2. Empower Canadians

Create an environment of competitive prices, greater product choice and informed decision-making for the benefit of all Canadians.

Consumers have more power than ever in today's fast-changing digital economy. The Bureau recognizes its capacity to empower Canadians to make more informed purchasing decisions. Over the next three years, we will do this by ensuring consumers have access to accurate information, and benefit from a wide range of products and services at competitive prices.

We will continue to seek opportunities to highlight the dangers of both domestic and international deceptive marketing practices through consumer-friendly information products distributed via new and established avenues and platforms. We will also increase awareness of consumer deception through more transparent and proactive communications.

With Canadians conducting more transactions online, consumers are increasingly vulnerable to new and more sophisticated forms of deceptive and fraudulent practices. We will target our efforts to address false and misleading representations and deceptive marketing practices that negatively affect consumers.

Subject to parliamentary approval, we will administer the *Price Transparency Act*, which addresses unjustified cross-border price discrimination.

Our commitments for 2015–2018:

- Empower Canadians to make informed decisions and protect their own interests before and after making purchases, through targeted information and outreach activities.
- Focus our enforcement, education and advocacy activities on addressing real marketplace issues of concern to consumers.
- Collaborate with domestic and international agencies to act against fraudulent and deceptive advertising in the growing online and mobile markets.
- Work with partners and stakeholders to reach a broader audience and deliver on our mandate more efficiently and effectively.
- Implement the *Price Transparency Act* (subject to parliamentary approval) and grow consumer and business awareness of our work related to the Canada-U.S. price gap.

3. Promote Competition

Promote and advocate for a more competitive marketplace, emphasizing smart regulation focused on achieving legitimate regulatory objectives.

Competition is a key contributor to economic growth. Canadian consumers have shown interest in stronger competition and more choice through their rapid adoption of innovative products and services in both regulated and non-regulated sectors. The Bureau will enforce the *Competition Act* such that innovative business models are encouraged. This will benefit ongoing economic growth by providing consumers with lower prices, greater convenience, better service and improved product quality.

Within our legislative mandate, we will work to influence regulators and policymakers at all levels of government to adopt better regulations and pro-competition policies. We will further deliver on our mandate by continuing to be the leading voice in Canada on competition matters. We will also work with Industry Canada to promote the continued adoption of strong competition policy as a cornerstone of Canada's economic development approach.

Our commitments for 2015–2018:

- Identify and analyze how regulated sectors in the Canadian economy might benefit from increased competition so we engage effectively on matters affecting competition.
- Leverage market studies, partnerships, international fora and other opportunities to advocate for competition principles in regulatory decision-making.
- Analyze innovation and its impact on dynamic competition.
- Deter or prevent anti-competitive conduct hindering the emergence of innovation without compromising consumers' rights to informed choice by enforcing the reviewable practices, false and misleading representations and deceptive marketing practices provisions of the *Competition Act* and labelling statutes.
- Provide governments with expertise and advice on competition policy.

4. Collaborate with Partners

Collaborate with domestic and international partners to promote strong competition principles and expand opportunities for Canadian participation in world markets.

The Bureau will continue to expand its collaboration efforts by strengthening partnerships with other competition agencies and stakeholders at home and around the world.

We will work with our partners to protect Canadians against international anti-competitive conduct and to promote strong competition principles and best practices.

Our commitments for 2015–2018:

- Cooperate and collaborate with domestic and international partners to support enforcement efforts.
- Participate in multilateral organizations that foster greater cooperation between competition agencies, promote competition law, and develop best practices in policy and enforcement (e.g., the International Competition Network, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network).
- Leverage international fora, partnerships and trade agreements to enhance our enforcement activities at home and promote competitive markets for Canadian exporters and investors abroad.
- Support the federal government's free trade initiatives by negotiating competition chapters in international trade agreements that promote opportunities for Canadian exporters and investors.

5. Champion Excellence

Promote a culture of excellence throughout the Bureau founded on openness, collaboration and engagement, and securing tangible results.

Our people are our foundation. To contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Bureau and to deliver on our objectives to increase compliance, empower Canadians, promote competition and collaborate with our partners, we need a flexible, adaptable, highly-skilled professional workforce that understands how enforcement and competition promotion help Canadian businesses and consumers prosper.

Building on our people's talents, skills and experience, we will further strengthen our ability to deliver on our mandate by promoting a culture of excellence focused on openness, collaboration and engagement.

We will be open and transparent with the public and stakeholders as described in our *Action Plan on Transparency*, seeking opportunities to consult on important issues and engaging with external parties at the early stages of investigations.

Through the introduction and implementation of a strategic planning framework, we will enhance the stewardship and management of the Bureau and ensure that resources are dedicated to achieving our priorities and managed effectively and efficiently to ensure value for money for Canadians.

We also need to ensure our people have the skills, competencies and tools they need. We will ensure that our approach to developing our people supports the Bureau in achieving its objectives and promotes values and ethics at the highest standard, consistent with the requirements of the Bureau's mandate. We will also promote increased employee engagement and collaboration throughout the Bureau by using new and innovative internal communications tools.

At the same time, we will support and contribute to departmental and government-wide efforts to improve the management of government and the delivery of services.

Our commitments for 2015–2018:

- Implement a new strategic decision-making framework to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our investigations, merger reviews and promotion activities.
- Develop and implement a talent management framework focused on ensuring our people have the necessary skills and competencies to deliver on our mandate.
- Promote a respectful, healthy and inclusive workplace, by ensuring employees are guided by the values and ethics of the public service and the Bureau.
- Consistent with departmental and government-wide efforts, improve internal management practices to ensure service delivery realizes the benefits of government initiatives related to information technology, information management, finance and human resources.

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